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B510

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## Boys and Girls

PEACE DAY IN LONDON.

Dear Cousins,—

I promised in my last letter to tell you a little bit about Peace Day in London. By the time you read this that news will be a month old or more, but Cousin Mikes can't be trotting about the country and writing letters all at the same time, can they? Well, I think I told you how everybody in London was busy decorating days before the big Procession was to take place, and everybody tried at least to hang out a flag. As I went up to the city the train passed by some of the poor, poor quarters, where it's all crowded, brick pavements and narrow streets; and they had hung out strings of bunting and flags, too, doing their bit, just like the great shops and houses in the West End. Everybody seemed happy, and I don't think I have ever seen so many people all together at once.

Some of you who live away off in lonely places on the prairie simply can't imagine what a London crowd is like. If you once get into one, you can't get out for ages. The people press upon you from all sides, so that really you can hardly breathe. Some people don't like it, but I do—especially a Peace Day crowd, for everybody had had somebody in the war sometime or other, and, even though all the somébodies hadn't come back, yet their relations turned out to celebrate peace—glad that their boys had done what they could. There were thousands of returned men in the crowd, waiting to see the troops.

They didn't have to wait long. I hope that all of you, some day, will be in London, England, on some great day. There is no place in the world like it. Before ever we saw any soldiers we could hear a great roar coming nearer and nearer, and as it came

closer to us we could hear, "The Americans!" "Pershing!" and next thing we knew, General Pershing came riding slowly by, saluting all the time, as the people cheered and shouted themselves hoarse. That's why a London crowd's so great; they do know how to cheer. You are young Canadians, and you must learn how to shout all together and show your enthusiasm at public times. It isn't that people in Canada don't feel things, but they are a bit shy of showing it, and I have seen some parades in Toronto when you couldn't hear a cheer from one end of the street to the other!

Well, after the Americans, representatives of all the other allied troops marched past, amidst deafening cheers, but when Marshal Foch came by at the head of the French, I thought I was going to be deaf forever. You never heard such a noise in your life. I was as bad as anybody, and I shouted and waved my hat in a way Mrs. Cousin Mike wouldn't have approved of, I fear. (She can't stand crowds, so she wasn't with me.) Then we saw Belgians and Serbians—they were cheered most of all of the Allies—and Chinese and Japanese. I should think men of every race on earth except Germans and Turks.

That was all wonderful enough, but after the Allies our own men came by. Then the cheering began to be one long roar that never stopped; it just became louder and more frenzied occasionally at times when people like Admiral Beatty came by. He marched along at the head of the naval detachment, cap on one side, just as you have all seen his picture, and the sailors marched behind, 4,000 of them, representing all parts of the Navy that kept the sea for us. They had to halt near my corner, and then people from the houses began to throw candies and fruit and eats of all kinds for them to catch. It was lots of fun, especially when one bag

of cherries burst in mid-air, and again, when a man threw down a basket of fruit and asked the boys to throw the basket back! There's always some fun in a crowd.

After the Navy came the Army, with Sir Douglas Haig on horseback at the head; and I wonder the people ever stayed in their places—they were mad with enthusiasm—and it did seem wonderful to see those men who had been the brains of all those great battles in France and Flanders which had been won by the Army behind. Every branch of the Army followed, and some of the old regiments marched along, with their old, tattered flags crowned with laurel wreaths, telling the story of many a hard fight. A great section of men went past, bearing the massed standards of the Army (that means all the regimental flags together), and every one was crowned with green laurel leaves. When they came to the monument erected to the memory of those who died in battle they lowered their flags for an instant as a salute to the Dead. Everybody in the procession saluted, and a day or two later, when R 34—that big airship that flew to America and back—flew over that same monument, she dipped slightly, too, in reverence to the memory of those who fell. On Peace Day itself there were just a few flowers by the monument, but two days later the foot of it was banked up with great masses of flowers and wreaths of every description, from most expensive hothouse flowers to a bunch of buttercups and daisies, tied up with a bit of string. I saw it all, and it was the most beautiful part of London to me.

But I must come back to the Procession. There was a huge searchlight on a wagon, an anti-aircraft gun and a big cage of carrier-pigeons, because these had all helped in the war. When they came opposite the King's box, the pigeons were all let loose and flew away. That was their salute. And along came four big Tanks! The crowd began to be afraid they wouldn't get round the corner, and they pushed and pressed and swayed for a bit, but every Tank got away safely, and we breathed again—as well as we could! After the Army came the women, the W.A.A.C.'s, if you know what they are. They're Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, and they were cooks and secretaries and a whole heap of things in France, helping the Army. Some women helped the Navy, some went on the land, some cut down trees, and, as you all know, thousands of them were nurses. And the crowd cheered them every bit as much as the men. It was a wonderful sight.

And that was the end of it all. It's about time it was the end of my letter, too. It's a good thing the Editor and I aren't on the same side of the Atlantic just now, else I might here something about "space" in the "Churchman!" But I wish you could all have been there to see it with me. One day you must all come to London; then you'll know in full what it means to belong to the British Empire. Canada's the best place on earth to live in—I wouldn't live anywhere else myself—but we do want to remember sometimes that we belong to a bigger place even than our own Dominion, and London makes you learn that.

I felt it more one day when I went to Westminster Abbey, and, turning a corner, I came suddenly upon a monument erected to the memory of Wolfe. That wasn't all. Grouped about that monument were many flags belonging to Canadian regiments who had deposited their colours there for safekeeping in the heart of the Empire till the war should be over and they could come and carry them back again to the country they had left. Some regiments, as you know, left their flags in Canadian



churches and some had left them in London's great church. Most of them have gone now, but the people who saw them in London will never forget them. They helped to make Canada more real for England, and England more real for Canada.

Next letter, what shall I tell you about? I don't know: something about the sea and the country, perhaps. It might even be the old black cat who lives in this house—at least at dinner-time! Other times he goes out hunting! But, good-bye. I shall never stop.

Your affectionate  
Cousin Mike.

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